

Valium payments basis for suit

By DAVE VAN HORN

Daily Collegian Staff Writer

The Pennsylvania Medical Society is suing the State Department of Public Welfare for eliminating payments for Valium and other benzodiazepines in the state Medicaid program.

"We feel that the welfare department is practicing medicine without a license," said Leroy Erickson, the society's director of educational activities. "They are condemning the poor to second-class medical care."

Roger A. Cutt, commissioner for Medical Programs for the public welfare department, said Medicaid pays for health care while the drug program is an optional expense. Families of four with an income of less than \$4,000 to \$4,200 are eligible for Medicaid, but they don't have to be on welfare, he said.

Cutt said Valium is the most prescribed drug in the country and is abused because of its widespread use.

"Physicians will prescribe the drug indiscriminately," Cutt

said. Most physicians, he said, receive their information about the drug from "detail men" — salesmen hired by the drug manufacturing companies to sell their product.

"Manufacturers spend billions of dollars on advertising, and they do influence the physician," Cutt said.

The main point of conflict is between Valium and Librium. Erickson said generic substitution is not right because the two drugs act differently upon each individual. Librium will not have the same effects as Valium in treatment for muscle spasms and convulsive seizures, he said.

Cutt said for relief of anxiety and tension, Librium and Valium are similar. He said Valium is primarily used as a mild tranquilizer, but Librium could do the same at a much lower price.

Cutt said \$1 million in state funds would be saved in one year if Valium benefits were removed from Medicaid and if people switched to Librium. "It is a cost-saving measure."

A hearing in federal court on the matter will be held Nov. 16.



The state Department of Welfare's decision to terminate Medicaid payments for Valium, a depressant prescribed to relieve anxiety, has prompted a lawsuit by the Pennsylvania Medical Society.

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A Reminder to Our Concert Audience

The University Concert Committee has the responsibility to provide the best artists we can obtain within the limitations of our financial means and to do this at a reasonable ticket price that students can afford, but we also have a responsibility for the safety of our audience, the observance of the Pennsylvania Fire and Panic Laws — which insure audience safety — and for the maintenance of physical facilities for their intended use after concerts.

Unfortunately, few members of an audience consider the existing circumstances until such tragedies as the Beverly Hills Supper Club, Coconut Grove or the Washington Theatre occur. In most cases, deaths occurred not from fire but from panic. Too many have the attitude "it can't happen here." Neither the Concert Committee nor the University Department of Safety can assume this attitude.

We would like to share with you our responsibilities as well as our concerns so that we will not have to disturb the audience during the performance nor jeopardize our having access to the facilities for future concerts. We trust that your understanding of our duties and responsibilities will result in less inconveniences and misunderstandings and a more enjoyable evening for everyone.

The major problems that jeopardize our programs are:

- Smoking**
Smoking is permitted in designated areas such as corridors at the balcony level and to the rear of the bleachers in Rec Hall and in the lobbies of Eisenhower and Schwab Auditoriums.
- Open Flames**
Lighting of matches or lighters requires us to turn on the house lights for safety purposes. This action destroys the mood and atmosphere that the artists have created between themselves and the audience. As a result of this change of atmosphere we have lost many encores the artists had planned on performing. The artist can hear applause from the dressing room; they can't see matches so we encourage loud applause.
- Aisles**
Aisles must be kept clear, not only for quick egress to exits in case of emergency, but so that our first aid teams can reach members of the audience who become ill for various reasons during the concert.
- Alcohol**
Alcohol is not permitted in the buildings and it will be confiscated by the proper authorities.
- Frisbees**
Frisbees are fun on the lawn but dangerous in a crowd. There have been several injuries to unsuspecting members of the audience when hit by a frisbee. The most serious thus far was the near loss of eyesight when a contact lens was shattered in a person's eye.
- Entering Rec Hall**
The doors to Rec Hall cannot be opened until the artists finish their sound check. This is often delayed for various reasons beyond control of the Concert Committee. However, entry to Rec Hall can be as easy or difficult as you make it. With single lines at each of the six entrances, tickets and date in hand, it will take about ten minutes at the most. Crowding the doors causes delays, aggravation and possible injury to your fellow concert goers.

These are some of our major areas of concern not withstanding artists and road crews eccentricities. By sharing with you these problems, we ask your understanding and cooperation so that we may continue to obtain facilities and present concerts.

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